# TALMAGE'S SERMON.

His text was: "We are Witnesses" Acts iii., 12. Following is his sermon:

In the days of George Stephenson, the perfector of the locomotive engine, the scientists proved conclusively that a railway train could never be driven by steam power successfully and without peril; but the rushing express trains from Liverpool to Edinburgh, and from Edinburgh to London, have made all the nations witness of the splendid achievement. Mathinists and navigators proved conclusively that a steamboat could never cross the atlantic ocean. but no sooer had they successfully proved the impossibility of such an undertaking than the work was done and the passengers on the Cunard and the Inman and the National and the White Star lines are witnesses. There went up a guffaw of wise laughter at Prof. Morse's proposition to make the lightning of heaven his errand boy and it was proved conclusively that the thing could never be done, but, now all the news of the wide world by Associated press put in your hands every morning and night, has made all nation witnesses. So in the time of Christ it was proved conclusively that it was impossible for Him to rise from the dead. It was shown logically that when a man was dead he was dead, and the heart and the liver and the lungs having ceased to perform their offices the limbs would be rigid beyond all power of friction or arousal. They showed it to be an absolute absurdity that the dead Christ arose, and the deciples beheld Him heard His voice and talked with Him, and they took the witness stand to prove that to be true which the wiseacres of the day had proved to be impossible; the record of the experience and of the testimony is in the text: "Him hath God raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses."

Now let me play the sceptic for a moment. "There is no God," says the sceptic, "for I have never seen Him . my physical eyesight. Your is a pack of contradictions. There never was a miracle. Lazarus was not raised from the dead and water was never turned into wine. Your religion is an imposition on the credulity of the ages." There is an aged man moving over yonder as though he would like to respond. Here are hundreds of people with faces a little flushed at these announcements, and all through this assembly there is a suppressed feeling which would like to speak out in behalf of the truth of our glorious Christianity, as in the days of the text, crying out, "We are witnesses!"

The fact is that if this world is ever brought to God it will not be through argument, but through testimony. You might cover the whole earth with apologies for Christianity and learned treatises in defense of religion—you would not convert a soul. Lectures on the harmony between science and religion are beautiful mental discipline, but have never saved a soul and never will save a soul. Put a man of the world and a man of the church against each other and the man of the world will in all probability get the triumph. There are a thousand things in our religion that seem illogical to the world, and always will seem illogical. Our weapon in this conflict is faith, not logic; faith, not metaphysics; faith, not profundity; faith, not scholastic exploration. But then, in order to have faith we must have testimony, and if 500 men or 1,000 men, or 500,000 men, or 5,000,000 men get up and tell me that they have felt the religion of Jesus Christ a joy, a comfort, a help, an aspiration, I am bound as a fair-minded man to accept their testimony. I want just now to put before you three propositions, the truth of which I think this audience will attest with overwhelming unanimity.

The first proposition is, We are witnesses that the religion of Christ is able to convert a soul. The gospel may have had a hard time to conquer us, we may have fought it back, but we were vanquished. You say conversion is only an imaginary thing. We know better. "We are witnesses." There never was so great a change in our heart and life on any other subject as on this. People laughed at the missionaries in Madagascar because they preached ten years without one convert; but there are 33,000 converts in Madagascar today. People laughed at Dr. Adoniram Judson, the great Baptist missionary, because he kept on preaching in Burmah five years without a single convert, but there are 20,000 Baptists in Burmah today. People laughed at Dr. Morris in China for preaching there seven years without a single conversion; but there are 25,000 Christians in China today. People laughed at the missionaries for preaching at Tahiti fifteen years without a single conversion, and at the missionaries for preaching in Bengal seventeen years without a single conversion; yet in all those lands there are multitudes of Christians today.

But why go so far to find evidence of the gospel's power to save souls? "We are witnesses." We are so proud that no man could have humbled us; we were so hard that no earthly power could have melted us; angels of God were all around about us, they could not overcome us; but one day, perhaps, at a Methodist anxious seat, or at a Presbyterian catechetical lecture, or at a burial, or on horseback, a power seized us and made us get down and made us tremble, and made us kneel, and made us cry for mercy, and we tried to wrench ourselves away from the grasp, but we could not. It flung us flat and when we arose we were as much changed as Gourgis the heathen, who went into a prayer meeting with a dagger and a gun to disturb the meeting and destroy it, but the next day was found crying, "Oh, my great sins! Oh, my great Savior!" and for eleven years preached the gospel of Christ to his fellow mountaineers, the last words on his dying lips being "Free grace!" Oh it was free grace!

There is a man who was for ten years a hard drinker. The dreadful appetite had sent down its roots around the palate and the tongue, and on down until they were interlinked with the vitals of body, mind and soul; but he has not taken any stimulants for ten years. What did that? Not temperance societies. Not prohibition laws. Not moral suasion. Conversion did it. "Why," said one upon whom the great change had come, "sir, I feel just as though I were somebody else!" There is a sea captain who swore all the way from New York to Havana, and from Havana to San Francisco, and when he was in port he was worse than when he was on the sea What power was it that washed his tongue clean of profanities and made him a psalm singer? Conversion by the Holy Spirit. There are thousands of people in this assemblage today who are no more than they once were than a water lily is a nightshade, or a morning lark is a vulture, or day is night.

Now, if I should demand that all those people here present who have felt the converting power of religion should rise, so far from being ashamed, they would spring to their feet with more alacrity than they ever sprang to the dance, the tears mingling with their exhilaration as they cried, "We are witnesses!' And if they tried to sing the old gospel hymn they would break down with emotion by the time they got to the second line:

"Ashamed of Jesus, that dear friend
On whom my hopes of heaven depend?
No? When I blush, be this my shame:
That I n more revere His name."

Again I remark that "we are witnesses" of the gospel's power to comfort. There are Christian parents here who are willing to testify to the power of the gospel to comfort. Your son had just graduated from school or college and was going into business, and the Lord took him. Or your daughter had just graduated from the young ladies' seminary, and you thought she was going to be a useful woman and of long life; but the Lord took her, and you were tempted to say, "All this culture of twenty years for nothing! Or the little child came home from school with the hot fever that stopped not for the agonized prayer or for the skillful physician, and the little child was taken. Or the babe was lifted out of your arms by some quick epidemic, and you stood wondering why God ever gave you that child at all, if He so soon was to take it away. And yet you are not repining, you are not fretful, you are not fighting against God. What has enabled you to stand all the trial? "Oh," you say, "I took the medicine that God gave my sick soul. In my distress I threw myself at the feet of a sympathizing God; and when I was too weak to pray or to look up, He breathed into me a peace that I think must be the fortaste of that heaven where there is neither a tear nor a farewell nor a grave." Come, all ye who have been out of the grave to weep there—come, all ye comforted souls, get up off your knees. Is there no power in this Gospel to soothe the heart? Is there no power in this religion to quiet the worst paroxysm of grief? There comes up an answer from comforted widowhood, and orphanage, and childlessness saying, "Ay, ay, we are witnesses!"

When a man has trouble the world comes in and says, "Now get your mind off this; go out and breathe the fresh air; plunge deeper into business." What poor advice! Get your mind off it! When everything is upturned with the bereavement, and everything reminds you of what you have lost. Get your mind off it! They might as well advise you to stop thinking. You cannot stop thinking, and you cannot stop thinking in that direction. Take a walk in the fresh air! Why, along that very street, or that very road, she once accompanied you. Out of that grass plat she plucked flowers, or into that show window she looked, fascinated, saying, "Come see the pictures." Go deeper into business? Why, she was associated with all your business ambition, and since she has gone, you have no ambition left. Oh, this is a clumsy world when it tries to comfort a broken heart. I can build a Corliss' engine, I can paint a Raphael's "Madonna," I can play a Beethoven's "Eroica Symphony" as easily as this world can comfort a broken heart. And yet you have been comforted. How was it done? Did Christ come to you and say, "Get your mind off of this; go out and breathe the fresh air; plunge deeper into business?" No. There was a minute when He came to you—perhaps in the watches of the night, perhaps in your place of business, perhaps along the street—and He breathed something into your soul that gave peace, rest, infinite quiet, so that you could take out the photograph of the departed one and look into the eyes and the face of the dear one, and say, "It is all right; she is better off; I would not call her back. Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast comforted my poor heart."

Again: I remark that we are witnesses of the fact that religon has power to give composure in the last moment. I never shall forget the first time I confronted death. We went across the cornfields in the country. I was led by my father's hand, and we came to the farm house where the bereavement had come and we saw the crowd of wagons and carriages; but there was one carriage that especially attracted my boyish attention, and it had black plumes. I said: 'What's that? What's that? Why those black tassels on the top?" and after it was explained to me, I was lifted up to look upon the bright face of an aged Christian woman, who three days before had departed in triumph; the whole scene made an impression I never forgot.

In our sermons and in our lay exhortations we are very apt, when we want to bring il ustrations of dying triumph, to go back to some distinguished personage—to John Knox or a Harriet Newell. But I want you for witnesses. I want to know if you have ever seen anything to make you believe that the religion of Christ can give composure in the final hour. Now, in the courts, attorney, jury and judge will never admit mere hearsay. They demand that the witnesses must have seen with his own eyes, or heard with his own ears, and so I am critical in my examinations of you now, and I want to know whether you have seen or heard anything that makes you believe that the religion of Christ gives composure in the final hour.

"O, yes," you say, "I saw my father and mother depart. There was a great difference in their death beds. Standing by the one we felt more veneration. By the other, there was more tenderness." Before the one you bowed perhaps in awe. In the other case you felt as if you would like to go along with her. How did they feel in that last hour? How did they seem to act? Were they very much frightened? Did they take hold of this world with both hands as though they did not want to give it up? "O, no," you say; "no, I remember as though it were yesterday; she had a kind word for us all. and there were a few mementoes distributed among the children, and then she told us how kind we must be to our father in his loneliness, and then she kissed us good-by and went to sleep as calmly as a child in a cradle.,,

What made her so composed? Natural courage? "No," you say, "mother was very nervous; when the carriage inclined to the side of the road she would cry out; she was always rather weakly." What, then, gave her composure? Was it because she did not care much for you, and the pang of parting was not great? "Oh," you say, "she showered upon us a wealth affection; no mother ever loved her children more than mother loved us; she showed it by the way she nursed us when we were sick, and she toiled for us until her strength gave out." What, then, was it that gave her composure in the last hour? Do not hide it, be frank and let me know. "Oh," you say, "it was because she was good; she made the Lord her portion, and she had faith that she would go straight to glory, and that we should all meet her at last at the foot of the throne."

Here are people who say, "I saw a Christian brother die, and he triumphed." And some one else, "I saw a Christian sister die, and she triumphed." I saw a Christian daughter die, and she triumphed." Come, all ye who have seen the last moments of a Christian, and give testimony in this cause on trial. Uncover your heads put your hand on the old family Bible from which they used to read the promises, and promise in the presence of high heaven that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. With what you have seen with your own eyes, and from what you have heard with your own ears, is there power in this gospel to give calmness and triumph in the last exigency? The response comes from all sides, from young, and old, and middle aged:

"We are witnesses!"

You see, my friends, I have not put before you today an abstraction or chimera, or anything like guess work. I present you affidavits of the best men and women, living or dead. Two witnesses in court will establish a fact. Here are not two witnesses. but thousands of witnesses—on earth millions of of witnesses, and in heaven a great multitude of witnesses that no man can number, testifying that there is power in this religon to convert the soul, to give comfort in trouble, and to afford composure in the last hour. If ten men should come to you when you are sick with appalling sickness, and say they had the same sickness, and took a certain medicine and it cured them, you would probably take it. Now, suppose ten other men should come up and say: "We don't believe there is anything in that medicine. "Well," I say, "have you ever tried it?" "No, I never tried it, but I don't believe there is anything in it." Of course you discredit their testimony. The sceptic may come and say, "There is no power in your religion." "Have you ever tried it?" "No, no." "Then, avaunt!" Let me take the testimony of the millions of sons that have been converted to God, and comforted in trial, and solaced in the last hour. We will take their testimony as they cry: "We are witnesses!"

Some time ago Prof. Henry of Washington discovered a new star, and the tidings sped by submarine telegraph, and all the observatories of Europe were watching for that new star. Oh, hearer looking out through the darkness of thy soul today, canst thou see a bright light beaming on thee? "Where?" you say; "where? How can I find it?" Look along by the line of the cross of the Son of God, Do you not see it trembling with all tenderness and beaming with all hope? It is the star of Bethlehem.

"Deep horror then my vitals froze,
Death-struck, I ceased the tide to stem,
When suddenly a star arose—
It was the star of Bethlehem."

Oh, hearer, get your eye on it. It is easier for you now to become Christians than it is to stay away from Christ and heaven.

When Mme. Sontag began her musical career she was hissed off the stage at Vienna by the friends of her rival, Amelia Steininger, who had already begun to decline through her dissipation. Years passed on and one day Mme. Sontag, in her glory, was riding through the streets of Berlin, when she saw a little child leading a blind woman, and she said, "Come here, my child, come here. Who is that you are leading by the hand?" And the little child replied "That's my mother, that's Amelia Steininger. She used to be a great singer, but she lost her voice and she cried so much about it that she lost her eyesight." 'Give my love to her," said Mme. Sontag, "and tell her an old acquaintance will call on her this afternoon." The next week in Berlin a vast assemblage gathered at a benefit for that poor blind woman, and it was said that Mme. Sontag sang that night as she had never sung before. And she took a skilled oculist, who in vain tried to give eyesight to the poor blind woman. Until the day of Amelia Steininger's death Mme. Sontag took care of her, and her daughter after her. That was what the queen of song did for her enemy. But oh, hear a more thrilling story still. Blind immortal, poor and lost, thou who, when the world and Christ were rivals for thy heart, didst hiss thy Lord away—Christ comes now to give thee sight, to give thee a home, to give thee heaven. With more than a Sontag's generosity He comes now to meet your need. With more than a Sontag's music He comes to plead for thy deliverance.

## The Texan Cowboy.

Cow-Boy life has in the last few years lost much of its roughness. The cattle barons have discharged most of the men who drank, and have frowned so persistently on gambling that little of it is done. Cards and wiskey being put away, there is small temptation to disorderly conduct; so it is only when they reach some large city, and are not on duty, that they indulge in a genuine spree. On the ranches kept under fence they have little to do when not on the drive or in branding-time, the cattle being all safely enclosed. But they must take their turns at line riding, which means a close inspection of the fences, and the repair of all breaks and damages. Where night overtakes them there they sleep, staking their horses, and rolling themselves in their blankets. These rides of inspection take days to accomplish, for there are ranches in Texas which extend in a straight line over seventy-five miles. Those ranches which are not kept under fence necessitate more work. The boys must then keep their cattle in sight, and while allowing them to graze in every direction must see that none in the many thousands stray beyond the limits of their own particular pastures. They go then in parties, scattering over the territory, for they must cover hundreds of thousands of acres in a day.

It is not a life of hardship, and pays well enough. Everything is furnished to them free and of the very best, and they are paid besides thirty dollars per month. Each party stays out from two to three weeks at a time; but they take with them the finest camp wagons, with beds and bedding, cooking untensils, the best of groceries of all kinds, and as excellent a cook as money can employ. The prairies are full of game their rifles are ever handy. The life is free, fascinating, and peculiarly healthy.

These men are exceedingly chivalrous, to all women: this seems to be a trait born in them, as much a part of their moral nature as it is of their physical to have small feet, for it is seldom that a genuine Texas cow-boy can be found who has not the distinguishing mark of a handsome foot, and his boots are to him all that the somberero is to a Mexican. He will deny himself many pleasures, he will go without a coat and be seen in most dilapidated attire, but his boots must be of the best and most beautiful make that the country can afford; high of heel and curved of instep, a fine upper and thin sole, fitting like a glove, and showing the handsome foot to perfection.

Take the cow-boys as a class, they bold, fearless, and generous, a warhearted and manly set, with nothing small, vicious, nor mean about them, and Texas need not be ashamed of the brave and skillful riders who traverse the length and breadth of her expansive prairies.—Harper's Magazine for July.

## Others Spoke French Also.

A beautiful example of the sublime faith some people have in the superiority of their attainments over those of the people by whom they are surrounded, and of the confusion which occasionally ensues when it transpires that such faith has been misplaced, was presented in a railway car recently.

A lady and gentleman, the spic-and-span newness of whose apparel and belongings and the flawlessness of whose courtesy to each other bespoke their freshly wedded state, were speeding along in the express from Boston. At one of the stations they alighted and presently returned, accompanied by a young lady who was evidently the sister of the bride. During their brief absence their places had been taken by new comers and it wrs necessary for the party to distribute itself through the car. The sisters pouted a little at being separated by the aisle, and craned their heads across to whisper to each other.

They seemed to have a great deal to say. This was proved when they hit upon the happy expedient of conversing in French. From this time they sat comfortably erect and talked across in tones sufficiently loud to be easily heard above the noise of the train. Their French was not that of the salons. It had probably been acquired in the nursery from some voluble bonne. But it proved all sufficient for the transmission of the most confidential tales of the young wife's brief matrimonal career. It transpired that she was on her wedding journey, and not having seen her sister since the day when she started out in a rain storm of rice and slippers she had much to impart, and the particulars were thrilling. They talked in the somewhat thin, fine voices which are characteristic of "down east" maidens, and which penetrate like a child's treble.

When an occasional stop was made they were too interested to pause, and did not even lower their tones, they felt so sure everybody else could only understand United States. The wife had disclosed the whole history up to the present time when the train came to a stop in the Grand Central depot. Then in the sudden hush a gentleman and lady who had been sitting near by exchanged a few sentences relative to their luggage and plans and spoke in correct and fluent French. As their accents fell upon the ears of the authors of les confidence the effect was marvelous and the girls turned and fled like Assyrian hosts, leaving their belongings to be collected by the young husband who had understood nothing and seemed wholly mystified.—New York World.

## A Most Remarkable Experience.

Seventeen years ago I lived with my father and mother on the banks of the Stranger river, in Atchison county, Kansas, I was only 7 years of age, and one day my youthful fancy was caught by the pretty colors of a blacksnake. I pulled a small ring off my finger and a string out of my pocket. Placing the ring over the head of the snake, I started home in triumph, dragging the snake at my heels, and feeling as much a conqueror as the Roman emperor who dragged the captives behind his chariots. In climbing over a fence my captive made its escape. Ring, string, everything disappeared.

I shed a few tears at the time, but had forgotten the matter until lately. I returned to the vicinity of my old home in Atchison county for the purpose of buying some sheep. While crossing a small creek that flows into the Stranger river my attention was called by the barking of my dog to a strange something in a tree. I investigated and found there an immense blacksnake, fully ten feet long Between the dog and myself we succeeded in killing the snake, though I was obliged to use in the warfare both a club and a revolver. The dog finished the snake by giving it a shaking and tearing it in pieces.

You will hardly believe me, I know but you can have my head if it wasn't the same identical snake that got away from me seventeen years ago. How do I know? Simple enough. That little blacksnake had grown to be a monstrous big one; the little silver ring around its neck had grown until it was as large as a lady's bracelet, and the piece of twine had grown until it had become a good sized rope. But the trangest part of all was that the dog had shaken out seventeen little blacksnakes, and each one was the exact counterpart of the snake that made its escape from me in the long ago, while around the necks of each of the seventeen young ones were silver rings, and attached to these rings were short pieces of twine. And upon each one of these silver rings you could plainly distinguish the initials of my name, just as they had been stamped in the silver ring that I wore when 7 years old.—Kansas City Times.

## Caught at Last.

An Australian schooner recently effected the capture of the father of sharks. He belonged to the species known as the basking shark and was forty-feet long. When his jaws were pried open a pork barrel could be rolled in, and there were eleven rows of teeth in his jaws. He had the mouth to bite a horse in two at one clip.—Detroit Free Press.

## A Martyr to Faith.

"I have never let any of my dogs retrieve birds since an experience I had with a cruel sportsman over on the Delaware river one day last fall," said a Scranton bird shooter the other day. "The man owned a splendid pointer that knew a good deal more about some things than his master did, and we were both shooting quails over him along the banks of the river. He was harsh with the dog, and the poor creature was often compelled to do what he knew to be senseless things, just because he felt certain that he would be licked like the mischief if he didn't obey. Each side of the river was frozen over out to the main channel, where there was a strip about a foot wide that wasn't covered with ice. One of the quail that I shot started to fly across the river, and dropped dead on the thin ice within a few inches of the open channel. My companion ordered the pointer to go and get it, and the obedient dog dashed out upon the ice until it got within a couple of yards or so of the dead bird, when he halted, for the ice had begun to crack under him. Then he looked back at his master and wagged his tail, and his actions told us as plain as words that he knew it would be dangerous for him to proceed any further. I begged the man to call the dog back and let the minks have the quail, but he wouldn't listen to me. Again he ordered the dog to fetch the quail in, and again, the dog made an effort to reach it, but the ice cracked and he turned about, whined piteously, and in every way that he knew how begged his master to call him back. But the heartless man was determined to make the dog do as he said, and he yelled savagely at the pointer to get the dead bird. Then the dog sprang forward and seized the quail. The ice gave way under him, the current was swift, and out of sight the poor thing went, with the bird in his mouth. That was the last the cruel man ever saw of his obedient dog. He hunted down the river for a long distance, but it was useless, for the dog had perished under the ice while faithfully performing his duty. The man was sorry then, of course, and indeed the poor dog's death taugh him a lesson he never forgot."

## What a Child.

A retired general of the Union army, who lives in a small town in the interior part of the state, was talking about New York's children. "I am a countryman myself," he said, "and I have a small acquaintance with the ways of the town. Perhaps that is one reason why I can never get accustomed to the extraordinary wisdom of the little people of New York. Like many other old fogy I am still practically afraid of a waiter. When I go to a restaurant it makes me nervous to have a waiter standing and watching me and with a crowd around, and I find it almost impossible to order anything else than beefsteak and fried potatoes from a bill of fare. A few days ago I took my little niece down to Governor's island to see some of the big guns and other paraphernalia of war. On the way back in the elevated train she said:

"Uucle, if you are a general you must have a great deal of money.'

"What makes you think so?'

"Because generals own forts and islands and big cannons and all that. It seems to me that if you have so much money you ought to spend some of it on me.'

"How?' I asked.

"Well,' said the little girl thoughtfully, 'I don't know which I would rather have, a new pair of gloves or lunch alone with you at Delmonico's. I think, however, I perfer Delmonico's.

"We discussed it all the way to Twenty-third street, and as she finally made up her mind to the luncheon I took her over to the restaurant and placed her in a big chair—she is less than 8 years old and her chin barely rose above the edge of the table—and prepared for lunch. She took the bill of fare, glanced over it and glibly ordered raw oysters, shad roe, cucumber salad and boiled chicken with asparagus and green peas, and teased me half an hour to give her a sip of champagne. Imagine any child 8 years of age anywhere else ordering a lunch of that sort. She succeeded better at her time of life than I, after sixty years of work in this vale of tears, and had acquired one of the most difficult feats of civilization, that of ordering a dinner."—Blakely Hall in Brooklyn Eagle.

## A Mysterious Personage.

Our Vienna correspondent writes; "A mysterious personage who has been known for years under the name of Louis Graven, died a few days ago at Deregnyo, in Hungary. He is known to have taken a leading part in the Polish war of independence in 1830, and afterward to have come as a refugee to Hungary, where the late M. Gabrielle Lonyay employed him as librarian. From this post he quickly rose to that of steward of the Lonyay estates which are very large, and he become the intimate friend of his employers; but although he lived for half a century at Deregnyo he never revealed his true name nor stated what his former position had been. He was a great bibliophile, and devoted almost the whole of the fortune he had amassed to forming a library, which is said to be of great value."—London Times.

A method for soldering tin cans by electricity has recently been devised, and it bids fair to be quite generally used.